Definition of an Ombudsman

The Ombudsman Program of the Greater Lehigh Valley REALTORS® is intended to provide enhanced communications and initial problem-solving capacity to the professional standards process. GLVR is charged with the responsibility of receiving and resolving ethics complaints and hearing arbitration disputes filed against its members. An ombudsman is an individual appointed to receive and resolve disputes through constructive communication and advocating for consensus and understanding.
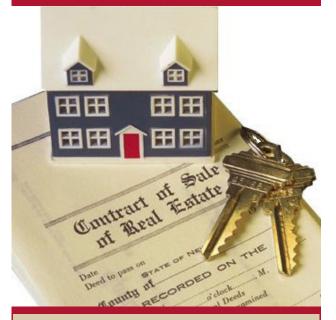
Conditions for Using the Ombuds Program

The Ombudsman Program is a completely voluntary benefit offered to its users. By choosing to use this program, you agree to honor and be bound by the program's conditions.

To the extent permitted by law, the ombudsman will treat all communications with you confidentially. An important exception to confidentiality exists where failing to disclose information would result in imminent risk of serious harm to you or someone else; where there is an allegation that the public trust has been violated; or where there is a duty to disclose imposed by law.

While you are always free to share your own information, by electing to use this program, you agree never to seek to force the ombudsman to disclose any information received in the course of providing ombudsman services. Any information revealed while using the ombuds services shall not be introduced into evidence in any subsequent proceeding.

Ombuds *Program*

Have a question or a concern about a real estate transaction?

GREATER LEHIGH VALLEY REALTORS®

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Bethlehem, PA 18017
610-882-4100
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QUESTIONS

ANSWERS

Ombuds *Principles*

Confidentiality
- Holds identity and all communications confidential
- Keep no formal records or individually identifiable notes
- Discussions with the Ombuds are not considered notice to GLVR for any purpose

Impartiality
- Treats all parties equitably/fairly
- Does not draw conclusions about the merits of concern
- Never gives advice, makes recommendations, or imposes a solution

Informality
- Off-the-record, non-escalating, and voluntary resource
- Facilitates communication and offers conciliation rather than conducting an investigation or a formal adjudication process

Independence
- Exercises autonomy in conducting Ombuds responsibilities
- Reports trends and recurrent issues to GLVR Board of Directors for system improvements and professional development

Direction
- The Ombuds will make all necessary attempts to resolve the complaint but if the efforts are note successful in resolving the issues, the Ombuds will advise of the next steps in the complaint process.

Qualifications of an Ombudsman
Experienced GLVR Realtor® members with significant educational and professional experience, a minimum of ten years' experience as a Realtor®, extensive knowledge of the Realtor® Code of Ethics, professional standards process, state real estate license law and current real estate practice who are specifically trained in the Ombudsman principles and standards of practice.

Role of an Ombudsman

- Explore options, approaches and available resources to resolve disputes
- Address complainant's problems/concerns in a manner which meet their needs
- Offers behind-the-scenes coaching and informal third-party intervention/facilitation
- Advocate for advancement of real estate professional standards, fair treatment, and system improvements.

Types of Concerns Addressed in the Ombudsman Program

- General transactional or procedural questions relating to real estate
- Potentially unethical or unprofessional conduct
- Disagreements or communication issues related to a real estate transaction
- Commission disputes

Advantages of Using the Ombudsman Program

- Provides services at no cost to you
- Offer timely resolution of conflicts and disagreements
- Parties maintain control of resolution approaches and outcomes
- Less adversarial than formal processes
- Relationships preserved and often enhanced

To access our Ombudsman services:
Contact the
Director of Professional Development
at 484-821-0506 or dirprofdev@GLVR.org